

SHARE

Homeless Intervention and Prevention Program

Operations Manual

2004 - 2005

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
Division of Housing, Shelter and Support Services Unit

Tables of Contents

PROGRAM PURPOSE	Page 3
PROGRAM SUMMARY	Page 3
PROGRAM STANDARDS	
A. Marketing Plan	Page 4
B. Referrals and Client Screening	Page 5
C. Eligibility Criteria and Verification Methods	Page 6
D. Determining Eligibility	Page 7
E. Income Limits	Page 10
F. Personal Resources	Page 10
G. Type and Amount of Assistance	
Rental Assistance	Page 11
Mortgage Assistance	Page 12
Security Deposits	Page 13
H. Self Sufficiency Plan	Page 14
I. Client Appeals Process	Page 15
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION	
J. Staffing	Page 15
K. Payments	Page 16
L. Collections	Page 17
M. Record Keeping and Reporting	Page 17
N. Deadlines	Page 18
Appendix I Admission Process	
Appendix II Admissions Criteria	
Appendix III Definitions	
Appendix IV Self-Sufficiency Plan Worksheet	

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the SHARE Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) is to provide time-limited financial and housing counseling assistance to low income individuals and families experiencing a financial crisis and is at risk of homelessness or who are currently homeless. HIP assistance is intended to facilitate their ability to maintain or obtain permanent housing.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The HIP is only able to help low-income individuals or families who are in a temporary and unavoidable financial crisis or financial crisis outside of their control. Clients must also have clearly demonstrated the capacity to be self-sufficient and be willing to work cooperatively with HIP staff to improve their financial situation. Eligible clients may receive either grants or loans for rent or mortgage payments and/or security deposits.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will work to the greatest extent possible to assure that citizens in every county and city in Virginia have access to these financial resources.

PROGRAM STANDARDS

A Marketing

A 1	<p>Local Administrators (LA) must develop, implement and maintain a Marketing Plan to ensure that all appropriate community agencies, homeless shelters or other related programs, service groups and organizations within the contracted service area are aware of the SHARE Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) and understand how to make appropriate referrals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At a minimum the LA must develop and maintain working relationships with each appropriate emergency assistance and public social service agency in their service area. It is important that all local human service agencies and other appropriate organizations be informed and updated about HIP so they can make appropriate referrals.• The LA will prepare, distribute and make available easy to read and understand basic information about HIP, i.e., who is eligible for services, the expectations of applicants, time frames, etc. This may be done through formal or informal community networking, the development and distribution of brochures or newsletters or through presentations to community groups and organizations.• The faith community maybe a source of referrals and efforts should be made to contact those churches known to provide emergency services.
A 2	<p>Each LA must be an <u>active</u>, contributing member of any local Continuum of Care planning efforts.</p> <p>LA's or agency representatives must be active contributing members of any local continuum of care planning efforts for several reasons. HIP is an important component of the service continuum. LA's should stress the importance of prevention and early intervention services and attempt to maximize the use of available community resources and leveraging opportunities.</p> <p>The term active will need to be defined by each respective CoC. Each CoC is structured differently and it is not possible to come up with a standard definition that would be suitable for each CoC. Generally speaking "active" means that the LA is present at the majority of the main CoC meeting, participates on committees, assists with writing the application if asked, etc.</p>

B Referrals and Screening

B 1	The LA will ensure that any applicant is able to receive necessary basic program information upon request.
B 2	The LA will develop and make available documents (brochures, information sheets, etc.) that will provide the potential applicant with basic information about SHARE HIP in an easy to understand manner.
B 3	The LA will ensure that no applicant is discriminated against because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, or national origin,
B 4	The LA will ensure that applicants have access to the program five days per week during normal business hours, excluding state or city/county holidays, and will ensure emergencies are handled expeditiously and all applicants are treated equitably and with sensitivity.
B 5	The LA will ensure that any staff person who is assigned to communicate with applicants or professionals about HIP are sufficiently trained to answer basic questions about the program,
B 6	<p>The LA will ensure there are formal procedures that are consistently utilized to <u>screen</u> all applicants for eligibility.</p> <p>The screening process shall be a simple and easy way for both the applicant and the Housing Counselor to determine if the applicant meets the minimum criteria for acceptance into the program.</p> <p>The screening process can not be designed to substitute for application process, denying the applicant to opportunity to appeal a final decision.</p>
B 7	<p>The LA will ensure that no applicant is denied permission to complete an application.</p> <p>However, there may be limits on the number of times an applicant may apply to the SHARE HIP within a defined time period. The limits, time frames and the re-application criteria are to be determined by the LA (and approved by DHCD) and are to be clearly stated in appropriate HIP documents and made available to applicants who have been denied acceptance into the program.</p>
B 8	The LA will make reasonable efforts to ensure that applicants have not previously received HIP assistance.
B 9	The LA will make available a listing of all other relevant community resources.
B 10	The LA will assist the applicant to locate other community resources if they are denied admission into the program,
B 11	The LA will communicate openly and realistically with an eligible applicant if there are no funds available and when funds might become available.
B 12	<p>The LA will ensure that each applicant is aware that HIP assistance is one-time, time-limited opportunity and that it is prohibited for a household or individual to receive HIP assistance more than once.</p> <p>However, in an exceptional situation, LA's has the option of submitting a formal</p>

	<p>request to the DHCD HIP Coordinator for a waiver to the once in a lifetime policy. The following criteria must have been met for the applicants to be considered for SHARE HIP assistance a second time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been at least 36 months since the last time the individual or household has received assistance. • The client must have successfully completed the program the first time. Specifically they must have worked satisfactorily towards attaining the goals in their self-sufficiency plan, they must have paid back any loans on time, demonstrated a cooperative attitude, etc. • The same eligibility criteria must be used to determine if an applicant is eligible. <p>The DHCD HIP Administrator will review the application and the recommendation of the LA's review committee and make the final determination as to whether a client can be served a second time.</p>
B 14	<p>When clients move from one jurisdiction to another, the two involved LA's will work cooperatively on client related matters.</p> <p>There will be occasions when an applicant resides initially in the jurisdiction of one LA, applies for assistance, is approved, and then chooses to live in the jurisdiction of another LA. While there are no hard and fast rules for these situations it is expected that the two involved LA's will communicate openly about the client and negotiate the most reasonable/feasible response. Generally speaking the client should be assisted by the LA that is responsible for the jurisdiction they choose to reside in.</p>
B 15	<p>The approved "Admissions Process" is found on Appendix I. Any significant deviations from this process must be approved by DHCD.</p>

Key Points

- The intent is to be sensitive to the needs of the applicant and to assist each applicant regardless of whether they are eligible or not. Applicants maybe under considerable stress and confusing or misleading information or vague assurances will only compound their difficulties. Ideally, the Housing Counselor will be able to assist ineligible applicant directly, but if this is not possible, knowledgeable and professionally trained staff person should be available to provide support and referrals to other community resources.
- As stated, HIP is a one-time opportunity. The program does have a degree of flexibility for those clients who have demonstrated a sincere effort to become self-sufficient and wish to stop receiving services before they have received the maximum amount of assistance. If the HIP staff have some doubt about whether the client is fully prepared to become self-sufficient it maybe advisable to keep the case open and provide additional assistance if necessary rather than close the case prematurely. We know that clients often remain in a fragile financial state of

affairs and may need more financial support than they anticipated, or experience another unforeseen financial crisis.

C Eligibility Criteria and Verification Methods

In order to be eligible for HIP, applicants must meet the following criteria.

C 1	<p>They must be in a temporary financial crisis because of unavoidable circumstances. <u>The current financial crisis must not be part of a chronic problem.</u></p> <p>Examples of such crisis include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A serious accident ○ A serious illness ○ A job lay off or reduction ○ Unexpected termination from employment ○ A delay in approved benefits ○ Loss of day care or transportation for employment ○ Homelessness
C 2	<p>If they reside in permanent housing they must be in imminent danger of losing their home or apartment.</p>
C 3	<p>Applicants who are homeless or a victim of domestic violence may be eligible for the program if they;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must have demonstrated the capacity and willingness to be fully self-sufficient • must be prepared to meet the challenges of self-sufficiency presenting evidence of employment or participation in job skills or training programs • are living in a shelter, or • are temporarily living in housing not intended for more than one family on a permanent basis
C 4	<p>They must not have an “untreated” serious emotional, mental, behavioral or substance abuse disorders which seriously limit or preclude their ability to become self-sufficient</p>
C 5	<p>They must have liquidated <u>all</u> their own personal financial assets and utilized other available sources of assistance.</p> <p>For example, some applicants have owned property, other than their home, and have refused to sell the property. If the income from the sale of their other real estate would resolve their financial crisis, then they would be expected to sell the property. They would not be eligible for HIP assistance.</p>
C 6	<p>They must be within the maximum income limits of 80% of the area median income as published by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.</p>
C 7	<p>They must not have previously received HIP assistance from this LA or any other LA in Virginia. This includes co-applicants or other adults who lived in the household that has previously received HIP assistance.</p>

C 8	They must be willing to fulfill the expectations of the HIP.
C 9	Applicants who are experiencing serious legal difficulties that could result in a jail or prison sentence are considered a high risk and must be considered on a “case by case” basis. The DHCD HIP Coordinator must be consulted in these cases before a determination is made.

Key Points

- Additional information about who is eligible for admission into the program is provided on Appendix II.
- When calculating an applicants income, the current gross income (earned and unearned) of all household members 18 years of age and older will be counted. The total household income cannot exceed the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD)’s low-income limit. If no member of the household is working at the time of application, the household income is “zero”. Review of the previous month’s income can also be used to determine income.
- LA’s must verify both the temporary nature of the financial crisis and the unavoidable circumstances that led to the financial crisis. Statements from physicians, employers, the Virginia Employment Commission, the Social Security Administration, departments of social services and other third party sources are required.

D Determining Eligibility

D 1	<p>A housing counselor and at least one other person must carefully review each client application to determine eligibility</p> <p>In determining eligibility, the LA must first determine the client has not received HIP assistance previously and that they fall within the approved income and FMR guidelines. Additionally the LA must use the forms provided by DHCD that are listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • SHARE HIP Eligibility Evaluation Form • Current Month Budget Form <p>After an applicant submits a formal application, the housing counselor may not make unilateral decisions regarding eligibility. Eligibility determinations will be performed by a committee upon review and discussion of an application for HIP financial assistance. In the case of an emergency, a minimum of two members of the committee may determine eligibility. There must be written documentation of the committee’s decision in each case file and signed by the committee members.</p>
D 2	<p>Required Verifications</p> <p>The following are the ways in which an applicant’s claims and statements can be</p>

	<p>verified.</p> <p><u>For Renters</u></p> <p>A copy of an unlawful detainer or a Pay or Quit Notice is required. Evidence of the monthly rental or lease payment is also required and the amount that is in arrears.</p> <p><u>For Homeowners</u></p> <p>A notice from the mortgagor stating the homeowner is at least 30 or 60 days behind in their mortgage payment is required. There also needs to be clear evidence of the scheduled monthly mortgage payment and the total amount of mortgage payments in arrears.</p> <p><u>For people who are homeless or victims of domestic violence shelter or in some other form of a temporary housing.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the applicant is living in a homeless facility or a domestic violence shelter, phone or written contact with the shelter is required. • If the applicant is staying with relatives or friends, a written statement from the relatives or friends is required. These applicants may only be considered as applicants if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ they are putting the friend/relative at risk of losing their housing, or ○ it can be verified they are living in a dwelling not designed to house the applicant, i.e., the applicant and his wife and two children are living with his parents in a one-bedroom trailer. • If the applicant is living “on the street” without housing, but has chosen not to become involved with any area homeless programs, they are not eligible. • Applicants residing in a “State-run” half way house or program are not eligible. • The need for and amount of security deposit(s) rental assistance must be verified with a written statement from the landlord or utility company. <p>In many cases, one form of verification would satisfy the requirements. For example, if the unavoidable circumstance were an accident or illness, a physician’s statement describing the accident or illness and the length of time the patient will be incapacitated would verify both requirements.</p>
--	--

E Income Limits

E 1	The applicant must be within the maximum income limits.
E 2	<p>In determining income, the current monthly gross income (earned and unearned) of all household members 18 and over will be counted and cannot exceed the HUD 80% income limit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If no household member is working at the time of the application, the household income is zero.• If a household member just started working, convert the income to a monthly income to determine eligibility. <p>If the applicant is self-employed, use the adjusted gross income from the latest tax return as the gross income</p>
E 3	<p>Income must be verified by such means as copies of pay stubs, statements from employers or other reliable sources, income tax statements, etc.</p> <p>If no income was received during the crisis period, the applicant's statement can be accepted unless there is reason to doubt the accuracy of their statements.</p>

F Personal Resources

F 1	The applicant must have exhausted their own personal resources and all other forms of assistance such as energy assistance, local funds, etc.
F 2	Both liquid and non-liquid resources, such as cash, checking and savings account, IRA's, and real estate, exceptionally valuable personal possessions of all household members will be counted to determine eligibility. These resources should be utilized before HIP assistance is provided.
F 3	The total resources cannot exceed the amount needed to pay basic living expenses such as food, utility bills, loans, or other necessities as determined by the applicant and the LA.

Key Points

- The LA should communicate with other agencies or groups who provide similar services to develop a referral system and determine who will provide what assistance, under what circumstances.
- Agency records can be used to verify that HIP assistance was not previously received from the agency. The applicant's statement can be accepted to verify that assistance was not previously received from other organizations.
- Applicants may present bank statements or other documents with zero balances for checking, savings or IRA accounts. The applicant's statement can be accepted at the discretion of the LA
- Applicants must have applied for all other reasonably accessible resources, such as energy assistance, local funds, etc.

- An applicant may present documents showing receipt of application for other types of assistance. The applicant's statement can be accepted at the discretion of the LA. Contact with local department of social service or local nonprofit organizations should be made if the housing counselor is uncertain.
- It should be understood that the applicant must make adjustments in their personal lifestyle and spending habits if they are requesting to receive HIP funds. Applicants cannot be accepted when they still making payments on valuable luxury items such as recreational vehicles, a luxury automobile, or if they have other un-necessary expenses such as cable television, Internet access, beepers, standing nail and/or hair appointments, cell phones, etc. The LA must make a determination based on the applicant's situation, and what is deemed to be reasonable and appropriate expenses given the circumstances.

G Type and Amount of Assistance

There are three types of financial assistance: rental, mortgage and security deposit. A HIP recipient may receive both rental and security deposit assistance. (Referrals for supportive services may be made even if no financial assistance is offered.)

Rental Assistance:

G 1	The maximum amount of rental assistance that can be approved is the client's monthly rent up to 100% of the Fair Market Rent.
G 2	Clients are limited to a total of nine months of assistance with either six months payments in arrears or six months of future rent payments.
G 3	Payments for arrearages may be provided in a lump sum. Future payments depend on a recipient's compliance with her/his self-sufficiency plan and a monthly contact with the LA.
G 4	All recipients of rental assistance must have a written lease agreement.
G 5	<p>Rental assistance is provided in the form of a grant/loan based on its agreement with DHCD.</p> <p><u>In grant based programs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA's may encourage the repayment of rental assistance, but may not require repayment as a condition for receiving HIP assistance. • If repayment of rental assistance is encouraged, it must be encouraged for all clients who receive this type of assistance • If the client elects to accept rental assistance as a loan, an Agreement and a Promissory Note must be executed.
G 6	<p>Payments may be made to relatives who are landlords under the following conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A "relative" is defined for this purpose as: parents, grandparents, siblings, uncles, aunts, or any other individual or family that has served

	<p>as a primary caregiver when the applicant was a minor child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “relative” must legitimately be in the apartment rental business, have two or more rental units and the units cannot be in the place of the residence of the landlord. • The client must sign the formal lease and be subject to the same eviction process as any other person/family renting from the landlord. • The LA can request a waiver to this policy for exceptional situations. The DHCD HIP Coordinator will consider formal written requests on a “case by case” basis.
G 7	All payments must be made to a vendor and under no circumstances will payments be made directly to clients.
G 8	Rental assistance and security deposit assistance applications must be processed within 15 working days from the receipt of all necessary documents and other information necessary to determine eligibility for HIP assistance. If the process unavoidably takes more than 15 days, then the reasons should be clearly documented in the client file.

Mortgage Assistance

G 9	The maximum amount of mortgage assistance that can be provided is the clients monthly mortgage amount up to 150% of the Fair Market Rent
G 10	Clients are limited to a total of nine months of assistance with either six months payments in arrears or six months of future mortgage payments.
G 11	Payments for arrearages may be provided in a lump sum. Future payments depend on a recipient’s compliance with his/her self-sufficiency plan and monthly contact and the LA.
G 12	HIP mortgage assistance is restricted to the recipient’s primary residence and must be occupied by the recipient.
G 13	Mortgage assistance is provided in the form of a no interest loan that may be deferred for a period of time determined by the LA.
G 14	<p>HIP funds used to provide loans to prevent foreclosure on mortgaged property must be secured by a lien on the property if the total amount of HIP funds obligated exceeds \$2,500.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The debt must be recorded with the Clerk of the Court in the jurisdiction where the property is located. Recording fees may be charged to program costs, but should be separate from the program recipient’s assistance. • The LA cannot limit or deny HIP assistance if the loan request exceeds \$2,500.
G 15	Funds used to provide loans to prevent foreclosure on mortgage property where the total amount of obligated funds is \$2,500 or less maybe secured with a formal signed agreement and a promissory note. LA’s may place a lien on properties for mortgage loans of \$2,500 or less if they choose as long as the policy is consistently applied and the client is informed during the application process.

G 16	All loans are provided at a 0% interest rate and payment schedules are set according to a client's ability to repay.
G 17	<p>Loan documents must be executed and the deed of trust recorded with the court in the jurisdiction where the property is located.</p> <p>This allows the LA to secure up to the maximum amount permitted. The actual debt however is the total of all funds disbursed during the period of financial assistance.</p>
G 18	<p>The following documents are part of a HIP mortgage loan closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement • Promissory Note • Good Faith Estimated of Settlement Charges • Settlement Agreement • Notice of Right to Cancel • Acknowledgement of Receipt of ECOA, RESPA and TILA notices and disclosures • Truth in Lending Disclosures • Deed of Trust or Credit Line Deed of Trust • Borrower's Certification Re: Rescission
G 19	Manufactured housing units (mobile homes) are considered personal property. HIP loans for payments on these units are secured with an Agreement and a Promissory Note, regardless of the dollar amount of HIP funds obligated.
G 20	<p>Because these are secured loans, the LA should verify that the applicant is the sole owner of the property. If there are additional owners who do not reside in the property, the LA should verify their willingness to sign the Note and Deed of Trust.</p> <p>If signatures of all owners cannot be obtained, the LA must obtain permission from DHCD to proceed with an unsecured note.</p>
G 21	Mortgage assistance applications must be processed within 30 working days from the receipt of all necessary documents and other information necessary to determine eligibility for HIP assistance.

Security Deposits

G 22	The maximum amount of security deposit assistance that can be provided is the amount of the rent deposit, utility deposit and the key deposit (any one or a combination) that is needed to secure permanent housing, providing the total security deposit assistance does not exceed 150% of the Fair Market Rent.
G 23	<p>Security deposits may be provided in the form of a grant or a no interest loan, depending on how the LA's chooses to manage the program. This decision must be clearly stated in all HIP documents as appropriate.</p> <p>If the decision is to require repayment, it must be requested of all clients who</p>

	receive security deposit assistance. Formal agreements with specific terms and conditions must also be used by the LA and signed by both parties.
--	---

Key Points

- Security deposit assistance given to homeless applicants or to those currently in an unacceptable living situation may be combined with rental assistance as long as the total amount of either rental or security deposit assistance does not exceed 150% of the Fair Market Rent.
- The costs of credit reports may be included as part of HIP financial assistance. Application fees for apartments cannot be paid with any type of HIP assistance.
- The LA may not use HIP funds to provide assistance on behalf of tenants in properties owned by the LA

H Self Sufficiency Plan

H 1	<p>Once an applicant has been determined eligible, the housing counselor must complete the Self-Sufficiency Goals Form found in Appendix IV with the active participation of each client.</p> <p>This is a negotiated process, and it is an important to teach a client to set goals and be held accountable. This form is a monthly compilation of needs and services provided to all family members in a recipient case and are an integral part of the housing counseling component of the program.</p> <p>Housing counselors are to determine, to the best of their ability the realistic length of time it will take to assist a recipient to become self-sufficient.</p>
H 2	<p>LA's should not obligate HIP assistance on a month to month basis, but should obligate the total amount total amount of funds needed, up to the program limits, to assist the client to become self sufficient. If a client does not use the full amount of obligated funds, the funds must be de-obligated and made available to other clients.</p>
H 3	<p>Each month the housing counselor, together with the client, must review the recipient's self-sufficiency plan and financial status prior to releasing funds for the next month's rent or mortgage payment. If appropriate, this contact may be by phone.</p>
H 4	<p>Clients who are not cooperating with staff and not complying with the Self-Sufficiency plan must be terminated from the program.</p> <p>Prior to termination reasonable attempts must be made to notify the client they will be terminated unless they agree to comply with program requirements. If there is continued non-compliance then the clients must be notified in writing that they have been terminated and are no longer eligible for HIP assistance.</p> <p>Self-sufficiency plans can be modified with mutual consent of both the LA and the client.</p>

I Appeals Procedure

I 1	There must be a multi-level formal appeals procedure for HIP.
I 2	<p>All applicants who are denied HIP assistance after submitting a completed application must be informed in writing of why they were denied service and their right to appeal and the process by which they may appeal.</p> <p>An appeal is not appropriate until a complete application for HIP assistance has been submitted, reviewed and denied.</p> <p>If an applicant has completed a preliminary intake and submitted an application for HIP assistance, there is no denial of HIP assistance until a team or committee has reviewed the application and denied assistance. The LA has an obligation to inform the applicant about their decision promptly.</p>
I 3	Individuals who have taken part in the eligibility decision cannot be responsible for making a final determination on the appeal

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

J Staffing

J 1	The LA will insure that no HIP employee is discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin in any phase of employment
J 2	The equivalent of at least one full-time housing counselor must be provided for HIP
J 3	<p>There will be a written job description for the primary HIP Housing Counselor (s). This job description will clearly state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job responsibilities and the expectations• That the individual is encouraged to become a certified Housing Counselor

Key Points

- Each housing counselor is required to attend training programs sponsored by DHCD in housing counseling techniques and procedures when such training is offered.
- Other key staffs are required to effectively administer HIP such as a program coordinator, an account clerk, and at least one support staff. These staff may not need to devote full-time to HIP, but should be available as needed and appropriate.
- Housing counselors are not expected to provide other forms of supportive counseling services, i.e., family counseling, mental health counseling, etc. When

it is clearly evident that these services are needed, housing counselors are strongly encouraged to make the appropriate referrals.

- The LA is encouraged to employ housing counselors who possess a college degree, preferably in a human service or field related to the work of the position or experience in fieldwork that is equivalent to higher education.

K Payments

K 1	<p>All assistance will be paid to vendors (landlords, financial institutions, utility companies) on behalf of HIP recipients.</p> <p>No assistance is paid directly to HIP recipients.</p>
K 2	<p>A Vendor Authorization of Payment form must be signed by the landlord or mortgage company before payment of arrearages, late fees, current rent or mortgage payments and/or security deposits.</p> <p>Landlords must agree not to evict the tenant for nonpayment or late payment of rent for the period of time for which the payment is being made. Landlords who are receiving a deposit must agree to accept the tenant and execute a lease and return the balance of any security deposit plus accrued interest to the LA.</p> <p>Mortgage holders must agree not to initiate the foreclosure process for nonpayment for the time period for which the payment is being made.</p>
K 3	<p>All arrearages may be paid in one lump sum, but all future rental and mortgage payments may only be paid one month at a time, with the next payment contingent on the HIP recipient's compliance with his/her self-sufficiency plan.</p>
K 4	<p>When an applicant is determined eligible for any type of HIP financial assistance, the total amount for which the household is eligible should be considered obligated.</p> <p>For example, a client is eligible for four months in arrearages totaling \$400 and five months of future payments totaling \$500, \$900 should be considered obligated. If the client does not need a full amount of funds that were obligated (delayed benefits were paid, wins the lottery or does not cooperate with staff or follow self-sufficiency plan, etc) the remaining funds may be de-obligated making the remaining funds available for other applicants or clients.</p>
K 5	<p>The LA must establish a payment system that will track obligated funds and payments, will account for all programs funds and will generate accurate reports on a timely basis.</p>
K 6	<p>HIP cases must be closed within 90 days of the date of the final payment for the client. Recipients should be notified in writing that no additional HIP financial assistance would be forthcoming.</p>
K 7	<p>Rental and security deposit assistance applications must be processed within 15 working days from the receipt of all necessary documents and other information necessary to determine eligibility for HIP assistance. If the</p>

	process, unavoidably, takes more than 15 days, then the reasons should be clearly documented in the client file.
	Mortgage assistance applications must be processed within 30 working days from the receipt of all necessary documents.

Key points

- The LA will request disbursements from DHCD on a schedule specified in the Grants Agreement. With DHCD's approval, additional requests for disbursements maybe processed to meet unusual circumstances or expenditures.
- For agencies serving more than one jurisdiction, there is no required "set-aside" funding amount for any jurisdiction. Local HIP agencies may make a decision to budget funds based on land boundaries and population with the understanding that each jurisdiction is to be treated equitably.

L Collections

L 1	The LA will develop and maintain a formal written procedure for collecting loans that will be made available to clients upon request.
L 2	If at any contact point, forbearance (agreement to temporarily discontinue payments) or altered payments schedule is agreed upon, it should be put in writing and signed by both parties.
L 3	Loan money that is collected is to be retained by the LA and tracked separately from other program funds.
L 4	The amounts of assistance provided using recaptured funds cannot exceed the aforementioned maximums for rent/mortgage or security deposit payments.
L 5	Half of the collected funds may be used to cover administrative expenses, while the other half must be allocated to the provision of additional loans or grants.

Key Points

- The LA may write off delinquent loans as soon as 60 days from the termination of services or pursue the loan for years, provided the procedure is documented, and applied consistently to all clients.
- Foreclosure is not an option that will be pursued under the HIP program. The lien will remain in effect and the agency may receive full or partial repayment when the property is transferred.

M Record Keeping and Reporting

M 1	The LA must develop and maintain organized individual client files that must be secured to assure privacy and confidentiality.
-----	--

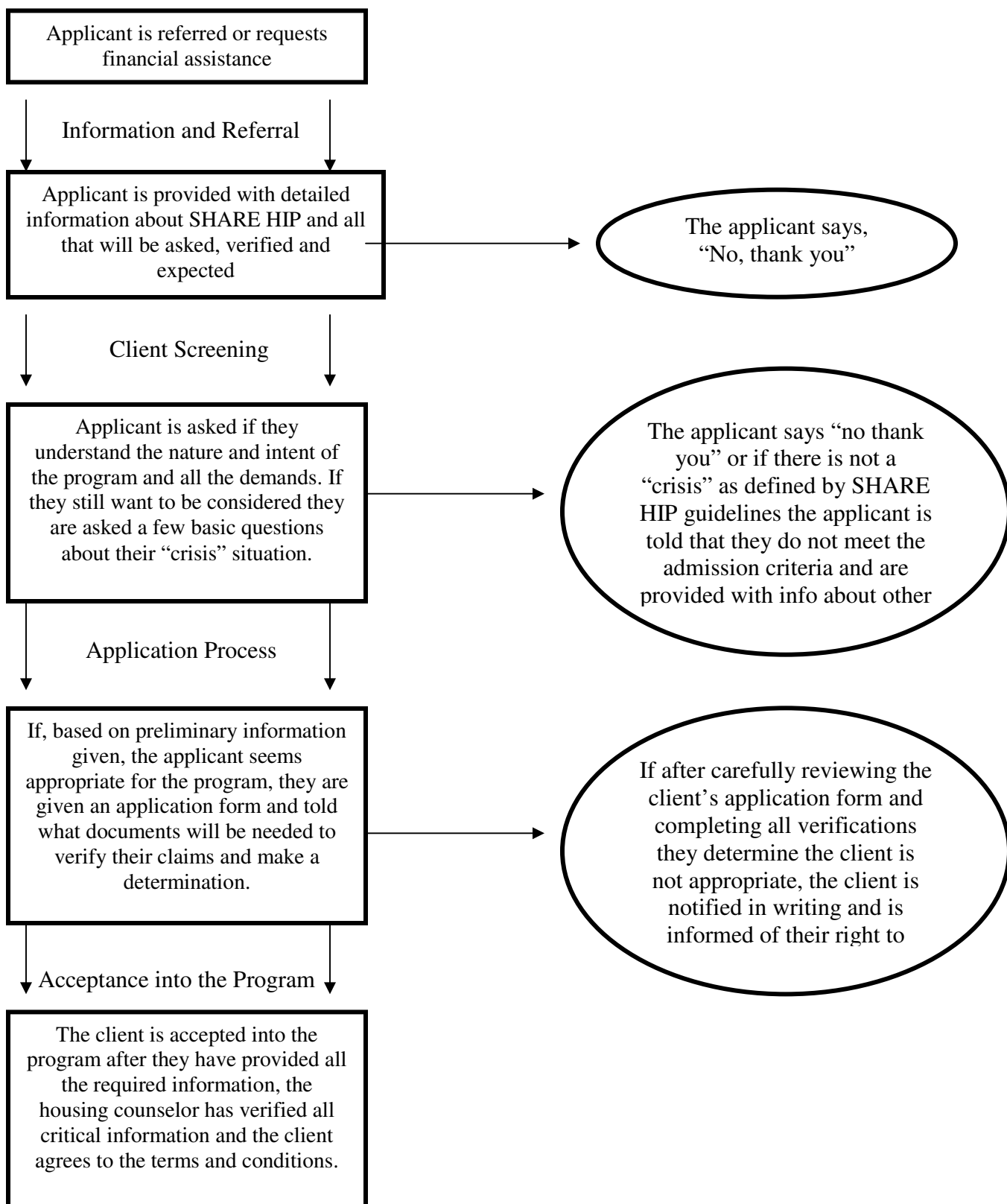
M 2	<p>Client files will contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The self-sufficiency plan • Documentation of all contacts with the client • Documentation of referrals to other sources • Records for all funds disbursements and collections of loan payments if applicable.
M 3	Client files must be secured for five years after termination of services to the client or after a clean audit.
M 4	The LA must maintain all records for funds disbursements and collections of loan payments if applicable. Financial statements including independent audits, as available, are submitted to DHCD on an annual basis. A separate set of accounts for tracking HIP funds is required.
M 5	The LA must complete and submit the HIP reports as required in the Grant Agreement. Failure to submit these reports in a timely manner may result in a delay in a financial disbursement or in extreme cases a change, suspension or termination of the Contract Agreement.
M 6	All financial records must be maintained according to generally accepted accounting methods. DHCD will require the submission of the agency audit or audited financial statements for the years in which the program operates, which includes a separate set of accounts for tracking HIP funds.

Key Points

- Each LA will be monitored according to a schedule set by DHCD. Monitoring will include programmatic, administrative and financial elements.
- The LA must use the forms provided by DHCD to determine eligibility or to administer financial assistance, such as Vendor Authorization and Mortgage Loan/Security Deposit Forms

N Deadlines

N 1	HIP clients must be formally terminated (in writing) from the program within 90 days of the final payment made for the client.
N 2	Rental assistance and security deposit assistance applications must be processed within 15 working days from the date of application. If the process, unavoidably, takes more than 15 days, then the reasons should be clearly documented in the client file.
N 3	Mortgage assistance applications must be processed within 30 days from the date of application and required documents. If the process unavoidably takes more than 30 days, then the reasons should be clearly documented in the client file.
N 4	The LA is expected to process all applications as quickly as possible.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

The SHARE Homeless Intervention Program (SHARE HIP) is a housing program designed to prevent homelessness for a defined population of adults and/or families. Limited funding does not permit SHARE HIP to be used as a social services program and eligibility must be restricted to those low-income individuals and families who truly are experiencing an unanticipated financial crisis and are able and willing to be self-sufficient.

This program cannot serve all people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Experience has shown there are a great many individuals/families in Virginia who are in a desperate financial situation. We know there are more than 800,000 people living below the poverty level in Virginia. SHARE HIP is intended to be the last option available to the applicant. Every other option or resource should be explored before the applicant is admitted into the program. But despite compelling pleas for help, SHARE HIP staff must make very difficult decisions and accept only those applicants who meet the defined admissions criteria.

This report is intended to provide further clarification about appropriate admissions.

Applicants must be in a temporary financial crisis because of unavoidable circumstances. The current financial crisis must not be part of a chronic problem.

Temporary means the applicant finds him/herself in a situation which has a strong likelihood of being resolved in a short period of time (six months or less).

Unavoidable means the situation was completely beyond the control of the applicant. The poor decisions, inexcusable actions or reckless behaviors of the applicant did not bring about the financial crisis.

Chronic means the applicant must not have a history of similar difficulties or other problems that limit the applicant's potential to continually be self-sufficient.

Examples of such crises include, but are not limited to:

A Serious Accident

Accidents caused by another individual or due to a circumstance beyond the applicant's control are generally appropriate criteria for admission.

But we know some applicants may have caused the accident and in many cases this is acceptable. Examples would be:

- An applicant on the way to his/her job slips and falls on an icy sidewalk and injures his/her back.
- An applicants slips off a stepladder while painting a room in their home and breaks a leg.
- An applicant who trips on a staircase rug and falls down a flight of stairs and injures his/her back.

But if the applicant was engaged in out-of-control, foolish, reckless or destructive behaviors, then he/she will most likely not be considered as an appropriate applicant. Examples would be:

- An applicant, who is arrested for reckless driving after racing a friend, causing a serious car wreck and suffering injuries.
- An applicant who gets intoxicated and falls off the porch and seriously injures him/herself.
- An applicant who tries to commit suicide.

However, an exception may be made if there is a family living in the residence and the co-applicant is an adult who has demonstrated the capacity to be self sufficient and is willing and able to fulfill program expectations. Additionally the individual who was responsible for the accident must demonstrate he/she is remorseful, accepts full responsibility and is fully committed to doing whatever he/she can do to appropriately resolve the situation.

A Serious Illness

Any applicant, who unfortunately is diagnosed with an unanticipated serious illness or disease such as a cancer, a head injury, a heart attack, etc., is considered an appropriate candidate. However, the applicant must have either a reasonable chance for recovery and be in treatment so they can return to their job or the applicant is applying for long-term benefits and there is a reasonable chance he/she will be approved.

Applicants who have a terminal illness, are not expected to live more than six months and will be unable to return to work are inappropriate candidates, unless:

- There is another adult living in the home that needs assistance in making the transition to becoming the only person in the household earning an income. This co-applicant must be capable of being self-sufficient and be willing to meet the demands of the program.
- There is an application pending for some other form of benefit that will enable the applicant to remain in their home.

Generally speaking, women who are pregnant and have a normal pregnancy are not appropriate candidates for SHARE HIP. However, if a working pregnant woman has a serious medical, “pregnancy” related, complication and is ordered to bed then she could be considered as an appropriate candidate.

People with serious drug and/or alcohol problems are generally not appropriate candidates unless they are actively engaged in a treatment program and their financial crisis is not related to their substance abuse problem, i.e., the person was gainfully employed and lost his/her job due to downsizing.

People with a mental illness can be considered as appropriate candidates as long as:

- They are actively engaged in either a treatment program or they are adhering their medication protocol
- Their financial crisis is not directly related to their mental illness, i.e., a consumer working as a peer-counselor in a group home is laid off when the organization loses funding.

Regrettably, the unanticipated/unplanned healthcare devises (lifts, hospital beds, etc.,) the costs of medications or an increase in medication costs to treat an illness cannot be used as criteria to admit a person into the program.

A Job Layoff or Staff Reduction

The applicant must be willing to aggressively seek another job and the applicant cannot be looking to supplement their unemployment check with SHARE HIP funds.

Applicants who are seasonal workers, i.e., fishermen, people who work in amusement parks, the poultry business, etc., are generally not considered eligible unless a financial emergency develops during the typical working season.

For example, a person who works full-time at an amusement park when the park is open is not eligible to receive services in the months when the park is closed and they have not planned for their layoff from employment. HIP funds are not intended to help an applicant make it through the “off season” until they can work again at their seasonal position. This chosen lifestyle requires that an applicant budget wisely and save their earnings for the “off season”.

Unexpected Termination from Employment

Applicants who were informed by their supervisor with no prior warning that the manufacturing plant is being closed immediately would be appropriate applicants.

Applicants who are terminated for “just cause” (insubordination, stealing on the job, unexcused absences, etc) are not appropriate candidates.

Applicants who feel he/she was terminated unfairly without prior notice and is seeking to resolve the matter via an official appeal may be an appropriate client. The key is if the applicant can document they are taking appropriate efforts to appeal the decision.

Homelessness or Domestic Violence

If a person reports they are homeless, he/she must be referred by a social service agency or a homeless services program. They cannot be self-referred.

If the person is a victim of domestic violence, he/she must be referred by a social service agency or a domestic violence program and her situation must be verifiable.

If the applicant is homeless or a victim of domestic violence, he/she must have demonstrated the capacity and willingness to be fully self-sufficient.

Other requirements:

- They must have liquidated **all** their own personal financial assets and utilized other available sources of assistance.

This means assets other than their primary residence. For example, if the individual/family has several acres of land that has been willed to them, they must sell it and use the proceeds to pay their expenses. If the family owns free and clear an automobile worth more than \$14,000 they must trade the vehicle in for modest transportation and use the difference to pay for their expenses.

- They must be within the maximum income limits of 80% of the area median income.

When calculating an applicants income, the current gross income (earned and unearned) of all household members 18 years of age and older will be counted. The total household income cannot exceed the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD)'s low-income limit. If no member of the household is working at the time of application, the household income is “zero”. Review of the previous month's income can also be used to determine income.

- They must not have pending serious legal matter that could result in a jail or prison sentence.

For example, if the Housing Counselor is aware that the applicant lost their job because they have been arrested for committing a felony in the workplace and he/she is out on bond pending a court trial, he/she may not be appropriate for the program.

Housing counselors aware of pending legal action against the applicant must discuss the situation with the State SHARE HIP coordinator before accepting him/her into the program.

- The unanticipated increases in the costs of gasoline or home heating fuels cannot be used as criteria for admission.
- Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to work with the SHARE Hip staff and adhere to the program guidelines and expectations. Sacrifices must be made and clients accepted into the program must be willing to re-examine their personal skills, abilities, lifestyle and values and understand the differences between “needs” and “wants”.

Definitions

Administrative Costs means the costs of salaries and benefits for staff that work with the SHARE HIP, office space, utilities, telephone, equipment and supplies and other directly related to the administration of SHARE HIP.

Application means the request, on the behalf of the Local Administrator for the funding reservation for the administration of the SHARE HIP.

DHCD means the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

Fair Market Rent means the maximum amount of aid for rent, including the cost of utilities, except telephone, in specific geographic areas based on the number of bedrooms in the housing unit, as established by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

Grant means funds for rental assistance or security deposit for program recipients that do not have to be repaid by the recipient.

Homeless means persons or families that are without housing, at imminent danger of losing their housing through eviction or foreclosure, or living in doubled-up, overcrowded or substandard housing.

HIP means the SHARE Homeless Intervention Program.

HIP Applicants means individuals or families who apply for financial assistance through HIP.

HIP Recipients means the individuals or families who receive financial assistance through HIP.

Housing Counseling means the provision of technical advice to homeowners and tenants.

HUD means the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

Loan means funds for mortgage, rental, or security deposit assistance for program recipients that are repaid according to a schedule developed by the Local Administrator or his/her staff.

Local Administrator (LA) means a nonprofit, incorporated organization or a government entity, with which DHCD, in its sole discretion, enters into a contract for the undertaking local homelessness prevention activities using HIP assistance.

Low Income means 80% of median income for the service area as established by HUD.

Mortgage Assistance means the monthly amount paid to a mortgage holder to assist program recipients with their mortgage at an owner occupied residential unit.

Program Applicants means individuals or families who apply for financial assistance thorough HIP.

Program Recipients means the individuals or families who receive financial assistance through HIP.

Rental Assistance means the monthly amount paid to assist program recipients with their rent at a residential unit containing complete kitchen and bath facilities.

Security Deposit Assistance means the amount paid or guaranteed to a prospective landlord to cover fees required prior to move-in to secure against damages, unpaid rent, or as a key deposit, as well as the amount paid to a utility company for a utility deposit.

Self-Sufficiency Plan means a plan of action agreed upon by a housing counselor and a HIP recipient to ensure the recipient will be able to meet housing and other expenses at the end of the term of HIP financial assistance.

Service Area means the area identified for administration of HIP by a Local Administrator.

Service Jurisdiction means the eligible jurisdictions, as determined by DHCD, which may be served by those applying to administer HIP on a local basis.

SHARE means the State Homeless Housing Assistance Resources, a group of programs that provides State and Federal funding to assist special populations.

SHARE HOMELESS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Self Sufficiency Plan

GOAL:

Action Steps	Person Responsible	Target Date	Date Accomplishment or accomplishments

Goal:

Action Steps	Person Responsible	Target Date	Date Accomplishment or accomplishments

Goal:

Action Steps	Person Responsible	Target Date	Date Accomplishment or comments

Goal:

Action Steps	Person Responsible	Target Date	Date Accomplishment or comments

